

## CHAPTER 6. CARIBBEAN OPERATIONS EXCLUSIVE OF THE GULF OF MEXICO

### 1. GENERAL INFORMATION.

*a. International Flight Information Manual (IFIM).* The following information is provided to inform crews of problem areas that may be encountered when traveling in the Caribbean, Central America, and South America. The IFIM contains specific information on an individual country's requirements for the following:

- Personal entry requirements.
- Embassy information.
- Aircraft entry requirements.
- Corporate aircraft restraints.
- Special notices.
- Aeronautical information sources.
- International Notices to Airmen (NOTAM) office.
- Airports of entry.

Detailed information regarding flights into Mexico is contained in the "Mexico Flight Manual," published by the Texas Aeronautic Commission, P.O. Box 12607, Capitol Station, Austin, Texas 78711.

*b. Disease Control.* Central and South American countries periodically experience epidemics of communicable diseases. Pilots and crews departing for destinations in the Caribbean, Central America, and South America should contact the U.S. Department of State in Washington, DC both well ahead of the proposed flight and just prior to the proposed flight. The initial contact should be made to determine if immunization is required and to determine the time period required for the immunizations to become effective. Some countries will actually isolate a crew and/or passengers if a particular immunization has not run the course of its incubation period. The final contact to the State Department is made to determine the latest health warnings in effect at the destination and/or possible intermediate stopping points. Under the International Health Regulations adopted by the World Health Organization, a country may require International Certificates of Vaccination against yellow fever and cholera from international travelers. No vaccinations are required to return to the United States from any country.

*c. Passports.* Those countries that do not require a passport to frequently enter or depart, require both crews and passengers to have documentary evidence of identity and U.S. citizenship. Although a passport is the best form of identification, a birth certificate, Certificate of Naturalization, or Certificate of Citizenship may suffice as evidence of citizenship. Refer to Chapter 2, Section 4 of this advisory circular (AC) for additional information on passports and entry requirements.

*d. Altimeter Settings.* Pilots and crews should be especially aware of the altimeter setting requirements of many of the Caribbean Islands. Various islands have different altimeter setting requirements. For example, Grand Turk requires en route flight level (QNE) at flight level (FL) 60 or above, and Punta Caucedo in the Dominican Republic requires QNE above FL 40. (See Chapter 2 of this AC for definitions of QNE, field elevation (QNH), and airport altitude (QFE).)

### 2. BAHAMAS.

*a. Aircraft Entry Requirements.* Private aircraft overflying or landing in the Bahamas for noncommercial purposes need not obtain prior permission. However, prior notification to the destination airport is required, and a flight plan must be on file. Permission must be obtained from the Ministry of Transport for overflight and landing clearances for nonscheduled commercial aircraft. In addition to having a flight plan on file,

**d. Alert Areas.** Alert areas are areas wherein a large volume of pilot training flights or unusual aeronautical activity is contained. All activity within alert areas must be conducted according to the FAR, without waiver, and no activity that may be hazardous to other aircraft may be conducted. All aircraft within an alert area, both participating and nonparticipating, are equally responsible for collision avoidance.

**e. Controlled Firing Areas.** Controlled firing areas contain activities such as the firing of missiles and rockets, ordnance disposal, and static testing of large rocket motors. The users of these areas are responsible for immediate suspension of activities in the event that the activity might endanger nonparticipating aircraft. The controlled firing area locations in the Gulf of Mexico are published in Notices to Airmen (NOTAM).

**f. Key West International Airport.** FAR Part 121 operations that land or depart from Key West International Airport must meet the special airport requirements of FAR 121.445.

**g. Noise-Sensitive Areas.** Noise-sensitive areas include outdoor assemblies of persons, churches, hospitals, schools, nursing homes, designated residential areas, and national park areas. As national park areas, wildlife refuges are considered noise-sensitive areas. Numerous wildlife refuges are located along the U.S. coastline surrounding the Gulf of Mexico, and many of these refuges have large bird populations. The heaviest concentrations of these refuges are along the Texas and Florida coasts. VFR flights over noise-sensitive areas should be no lower than 2,000 feet above the surface, weather permitting, even if flight at a lower altitude is otherwise permitted under FAR 91.119. The surface is defined as the highest terrain within 2,000 feet laterally of the route of flight, or the uppermost rim of a canyon or valley.

**h. Warning Areas.** Warning areas are established in international airspace and contain operations hazardous to nonparticipating aircraft. IFR clearances through this airspace can be issued when hazardous operations are not taking place. Because there is no provision in international agreements for prohibiting flights in international airspace, there is no restriction on flights in these areas. However, pilots should take note of the location of all warning areas along a planned route.

**i. Restricted Areas.** Restricted areas are designated under FAR Part 73 to contain activities considered hazardous to nonparticipating aircraft. Aircraft may not operate within 3 nautical miles (NM) of a restricted area unless authorized under the provisions of FAR 73.13. There are numerous restricted areas near and along the Gulf of Mexico coastline. Pilots should be aware of these areas and plan flights accordingly.

## 2. NAVIGATION AND COMMUNICATIONS IN THE GULF OF MEXICO.

**a. Background.** ICAO Annex 6, Part II contains standards and recommended practices adopted as the minimum standards for all airplanes engaged in general aviation international air navigation. It requires those aircraft operated in accordance with IFR, at night, or on a VFR controlled flights (such as in CTA/FIR oceanic airspace) to have installed and approved radio communications equipment capable of conducting two-way communication at any time with the appropriate aeronautical stations on the prescribed frequencies.

**b. High Frequency (HF) and VHF Communications.** Due to the inherent "line of sight" limitations of VHF radio equipment used for international oceanic airspace communications, aircraft operating on an IFR or controlled VFR flight plan beyond VHF communications capability are required to maintain a continuous listening watch and communications capability on the assigned HF frequencies. Although these frequencies will be assigned by ATC, actual communication will be with general purpose communication facilities such as an international flight service station (FSS) or Aeronautical Radio Inc. (ARINC). These facilities will be responsible for the relay of position reports and other information between the aircraft and ATC. Except in an emergency, the use of relay on VHF through aircraft operating at higher altitudes is not an acceptable method of communication with ATC.

**c. Communication and Position Reporting.** The following describes an area in the Houston CTA/FIR where direct air traffic communication is not available:

tive that pilots have current charts in the cockpit and that the flightcrew has a comprehensive knowledge of the new classifications.

**b. National Parks, Wildlife Refuges, and Bird Activity.** South Florida has a number of national parks and wildlife refuges. These areas are home to large numbers of animals and birds, some of which are very sensitive to aircraft noise. Everglades National Park in particular is very aggressive about reporting low-flying aircraft to the FAA. Because of the large expanses of seacoast and the presence of large numbers of migratory birds during certain seasons, the possibility of bird strikes is a very real hazard in south Florida. Pilots should exercise added vigilance at low altitudes and be especially aware of the guidance in the Airman's Information Manual (AIM), Chapter 7, Section 4, entitled "Bird Hazards and Flights Over National Refuges, Parks and Forests."

**c. Special Use Airspace and Military Activity.** The Miami Aviation International Flight Service Station (AIFSS) keeps information on file concerning the status of special use airspace and military training routes in the airspace within 100 NM of their flight plan area. This airspace covers an area south of the Tampa, Orlando, and Melbourne areas. Information on special use airspace is not distributed by a NOTAM, and military training routes are included in pilot briefings only at the pilot's request. For information on activity more than 100 NM from Miami's flight plan area, contact the appropriate facility while en route.

**d. Key West Naval Air Station.** There is a high volume of military, high-speed jet aircraft operating in the Key West International and Navy Key West Airports. It is recommended that all civil air traffic proceeding to the Key West area from the direction of Marathon, Florida contact Navy Key West Tower on frequency 126.2 MHz when approximately 10 miles east of the Navy Key West Airport (at approximately Sugar Loaf Key - N24°39' W081°35') for traffic information and/or clearance through or around the Navy Key West Airport traffic area. Radar service is available through Navy Key West approach control on frequency 119.25 MHz. Visual flight rules (VFR) flights departing Key West International Airport should advise the tower of the direction of their flight.

**e. Restricted Area R-2916.** Of special safety interest in the Lower Keys, Restricted Area 2916 is an area of 4 statute miles in diameter, protected up to 14,000 feet mean sea level. This area contains a tethered aerostat balloon flown at various altitudes and times. All VFR pilots flying south to or across the Lower Keys should treat the restricted area as being active at all times and avoid the area. R-2916 is located 17.5 NM northeast of the Key West very high frequency (VHF) omnidirectional radio range (VOR) (113.5 EYW) on the 066 degree radial. Authorization to enter this area is granted by Miami Air Route Traffic Control Center (ARTCC) on 132.2 MHz.

- Registration certificate.
- Certificate of airworthiness.
- Licenses (certificates) for all crewmembers.
- Aircraft logbooks.
- The onboard radio station licenses.
- A list of passengers' names showing places of embarkation and destination.
- A manifest and detailed declaration of all cargo carried.

c. **Special Notices.** A NOTAM dated April 1, 1993, contained the following warning regarding Cuban airspace: "The Federal Aviation Administration has been informed that an official Cuban government publication has issued a warning that Cuban Armed Forces will shoot down any aircraft that penetrates Cuban airspace illegally and refuses to obey an order to land for inspection. All pilots should take note; use extreme caution in the area of Cuban airspace; adhere strictly to Cuban requirements for overflight of their territory." Any aircraft that flies over Cuban national territory or jurisdictional waters may be intercepted and required to land if any of the following occur:

- Flying over national territory and jurisdictional waters without proper authorization.
- Flying without proper authorization outside of national routes or established international corridors.
- Executing inappropriate maneuvers.
- Not following any of the instructions from air traffic control (ATC).

d. **Legal Considerations.** Aircraft that have been ordered to land, or have landed without proper authorization, will be subject to whatever penalties the Cuban authorities may prescribe, without recourse. The pilot and/or aircraft owner will be held responsible for any damage, injuries, or resulting expense. No aircraft may make an overflight carrying photographic equipment, arms, ammunition, explosives, or other articles and substances the Cuban aeronautical authority may specify. Overflights shall not be authorized if the operation constitutes a danger to air navigation or if, in the judgment of the Cuban aeronautical authority, the operator does not offer adequate guaranties to cover any liability incurred because of the overflight. These liabilities include damage and loss caused to subjacent persons or property, and payment for any services rendered or obligations that may arise in connection with the overflight. The use of Cuban radio for flight information, ATC, or other purposes is considered a service, and operators should expect to be billed for its use. Any person or corporation, partnership, organization, or association subject to U.S. jurisdiction and considering the operation of aircraft into Cuba must review current Department of Commerce and Department of State regulations relating to trade and other transactions involving Cuba. Within 1 hour of departure, the PIC must file an IFR flight plan and a written statement with the Immigration and Naturalization Service office at the departure airport. This statement must contain all of the information in the flight plan, the name of each occupant of the aircraft, the number of occupants in the aircraft (including the flightcrew), and a description of any cargo. The U.S. Naval airfield/facilities located at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba are closed to all civilian air traffic except for valid emergencies. All emergency landings will be thoroughly investigated by U.S. authorities to determine their validity and the nature of their business.

#### 4. SOUTH FLORIDA DEPARTURES.

a. **Special Airspace Considerations.** South Florida has a complex airspace environment. Class C airspace exists at Sarasota, Fort Meyers, Fort Lauderdale, and West Palm Beach. Class B airspace exists at Tampa, Orlando, and Miami with their associated 30 nautical miles (NM) Mode C veils. All pilots should be aware of these areas and be familiar with all associated regulations pertaining to equipment and communication requirements. The new airspace classification went into effect in September 1993. Therefore, it is impera-